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ABSTRACT

Designed to help instructors create a supportive learning environment for older than average students, this guidebook outlines the special needs of adult students and offers advice on instruction and course management. Each chapter of the instructor's manual corresponds to a chapter in "Time for College," a book designed to teach adult students some of the skills needed to successfully balance family, work, and academic responsibilities. Information for instructors is provided and specific classroom techniques, exercises, and supplementary instructional materials are suggested with respect to: (1) the creation of a warm and supportive classroom environment; (2) helping students get to know each other; (3) acquainting students with the campus and its services; (4) combining work and school; (5) study habits and attitudes that promote academic success; (6) time and stress management; (7) extra credit assignments; (8) making use of the library; (9) sharing personal experiences and insights; (10) assessing learning styles; (11) career and academic goal setting; (12) making learning fun; and (13) effective college teaching. Self-assessment instruments, forms, and a list of student projects are attached. (ALB)

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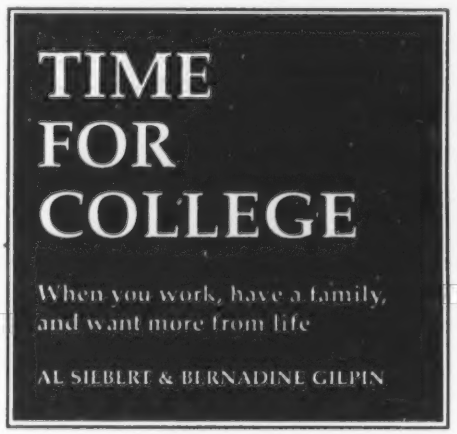
TEACHING COLLEGE SUCCESS TO OLDER STUDENTS

by Bernadine Gilpin

An Instructor's Manual to accompany



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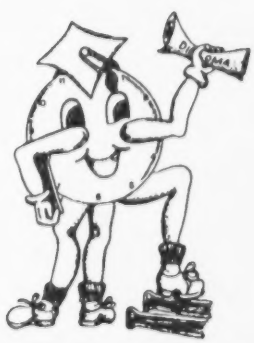
How to help older students:

Feel a warm welcome
Develop a sense of belonging
Start study-buddy and success groups
Overcome fears and anxieties
Locate useful resources
Manage time well
Study and pass tests
Balance school, work, and home demands
Promote the process of life-long learning



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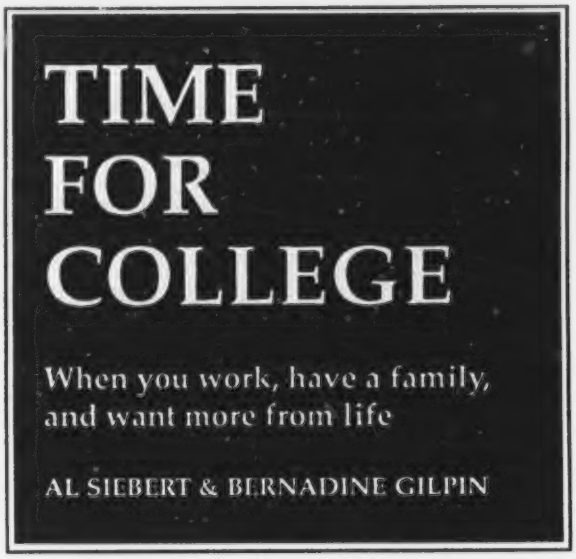

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Foreword

If you are looking for ways to improve your retention record with older students, this manual will be very helpful. In this manual Bernadine Gilpin shows how to help older-than-average students quickly establish friendships, overcome their nervousness, and discover that they, too, can succeed in college. She offers more than content and handouts; she emphasizes how to be effective handling classroom processes.

The manual is more than a collection of practical ways to be effective with older students, however. Bernadine is a strong voice at faculty meetings, professional conferences, and conventions showing college instructors and administrators how to understand the many ways that the student who works, has family responsibilities, and has not studied for years, is different from the traditional younger student. We even selected the paper used in printing *Time For College* (heavy weight, no-glare) with the older student in mind.

This manual provides instructors with tested classroom activities that Bernadine developed over a ten-year period. She wishes she would have had these activities available when she started college as an older student. It will give even the experienced instructor practical tips on conducting a course that helps the older-than-average student survive and succeed in college.

The Afterword offers guidelines on how to become increasingly effective as a college instructor. It contains observations about how important it is for college instructors to continually work at developing professional teaching skills and suggests ways to manage that development.

Our purpose has been to make this instructor's manual a truly valuable resource. We wish you success in your efforts and invite your feedback.

Al Siebert

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Introduction: Chapter 1

Going to College: Dreams of a Better Future

For over ten years as a community college counselor and teacher, much of my time has been concentrated on the older-than-average (OTA) learner. The OTA students are often undergoing major life changes and have some problems in common...The most critical problem is that they need more education for a new job or a new life phase. Trembly-kneed and sweaty-palmed they come onto the campus for the first time. How do I know what they are feeling? I read their papers in the classroom and listen to their fears and concerns in counseling sessions. I **know** because I, too, was an older-than-average student having begun college at the age of thirty-five. I was scared spitless.

You have probably noticed the adult learner who starts or continues college after a significant absence has many fears and a great lack of confidence. They share the "Have I got a brain left?" syndrome. It doesn't matter how successful they've been on the assembly line, in the home, community or office. If more than five years have elapsed since their last formal school experience, they are scared and have doubts about their ability to succeed. The longer the absence—the greater the fears.

If they are lucky, their institution will have made some plans to greet them with a welcome-back day for older students, support groups, or specialized orientations. As an older student as well as a counselor/instructor **for** older students, let me share some of my observations and techniques for reducing fears of the OTA.

No matter how fancy the packaging and how confident the outward manner of the new older college student, remember that first and foremost, they are **scared**. They have taken this huge step that says "We feel we can no longer do well in our lives unless we have some more education." Most "recycling" adults don't think in terms of what degree or specialized training

they are going to pursue because few have confidence they will succeed. Surviving the first four weeks of class is critical in proving that college is a place where they belong. The following case sketches illustrate this point:

John may have been the lead machinist, successful crew boss, and union representative valued by co-workers and employers for over 25 years but, he is still afraid about succeeding in college! John knows fractions and decimals, but because he could never spell his way out of a paper bag he is afraid he can't "do" college. His doctor says he must make a change, but school never was the way he learned best. He learned by **doing**.

May has been a registered nurse for 15 years, but for the last 14 1/2 years she has had doubts about whether she's chosen the right profession. She finally musters enough courage to face her dissatisfaction and takes one small step away from the days that have become such a grind. She registers for just one night class, but she is apprehensive.

The office walls are closing in on Dave. It's been the same old dull, boring job for the last seven years. There has to be something more exciting than this he thinks. Rumor has it there is going to be another big layoff. There's got to be a change but change is scary.

Jack's rehabilitation counselor told him, "You've got just one year to train yourself for a new job." Jack's brain still doesn't seem to be working too well after years of drug and alcohol use. He never was able to go the distance in school; he'd make a good start but then things would fall apart on him. Only one year! What can you do in a year? He's scared and feels this is his last chance.

Jill's finally got the kids in school and they are no longer so dependent on her. It's tougher and tougher to make it on one salary. It's time to think about a career of her own. But what? It's been so long since school days and she really just goofed around that one and only year in college. Things have changed so much and the kids are learning so many new things. How can she compete? She's scared.

Tom is just a little over 50 and the company has given him the "golden nudge." He has a retirement pension that will allow him to "get by." He picked up a degree almost 30 years ago; but what do you do with the rest of your life? Is it all over for him? Now that's scary!

Teachers of older students need to recognize that no matter what their outward appearance—grey hair, stylish pumps, work-worn jeans, bifocal glasses—these students are very scared and therefore very vulnerable. If we take our professional stance and spew forth tough standards, overwhelms students with information and academic jargon, some older learners will be intimidated or lost.

My daddy always said, "Know your audience." As a person who really cares, you understand about helping students to know teachers as human beings so that they may approach comfortably with questions. They need to meet one another and develop a sense of belonging to the group. We are not the only teachers in the room. If the scene is set properly, students will learn more from each other than they will from us. It is the teacher's responsibility

to set the stage and get each "instrument" to participate. Assuming the role of a master conductor is fun. Remember, though, that this group hasn't played the melody in a long time and they may be slightly out of tune.

Build the Comfort Zone for the OTA Student

W = Welcome with a warm "I'm glad you are here to start this exciting new phase of your life."

E = Ease them into college life and assure them that it takes time to adjust to a new life style.

L = Leave time for sharing fears, questions, and confusions.

C = Come to them as a human being who has had doubts and fears about your own college success.

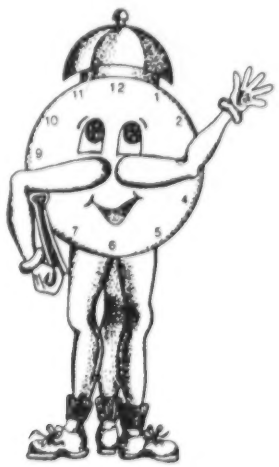
O = Organize the class so that students talk to each other.

M = Make guidelines of a course clear in simple non-academic words.

E = Exchange information about helpful people, resources and classes.

Tip: The first four chapters of *Time For College* address the issue of the OTA students' many fears and should be read right away. It may also help to recommend that your students read the appendix, "The Authors Talk"in the text. Many students appreciate learning about our backgrounds.

Note: The illustrator, Terry Rosen, is a single mother with two small children who returned to college to become a graphic artist. For those students with younger children at home, she has prepared an OTA Coloring Book. Purchasing information is listed on the back page of the textbook.



Chapter 2

Fears and Concerns: How to Confront and Overcome Them

The first classroom exercise I use with students is a duo-interview. I make up a bunch of goofy, non-threatening questions and hand them to each student. (See Attachment #1 at the end of the Manual.)

> The goofier the questions the better; laughter is soothing to the nerves. Half the class is asked to choose a perfect stranger and interview him or her. If the class is really large, you do the pairing, making sure students do not already know each other. It is useful to pick pairs who might have something in common or who are attracted to one another. Give them five minutes to interview their partners before switching roles and they are in turn interviewed.
>
> After this portion of the exercise, the chairs are re-arranged from rows into circles. After all, where did an unwritten law develop that says, "people learn best if they are looking at the back of heads"? If it's a fairly small class, there can be one circle. Make more than one circle if the class is large. Ten to twenty people in a circle works fine. Once the "round-ups" (or circles) are ready, each person is asked to introduce their new acquaintance by first name and sharing some interesting facts about their new friend.
>
> When everyone has been introduced, point to different people in the circle and ask, "What is this person's name and what facts do we know?" This reinforces the learning of names. It is helpful to jot down names/facts as an aid in remembering names. The sooner the instructor can begin calling students by their names, the faster the comfort zone is built. Knowing students' names really helps make connections. It may be the first time in years they have been called something other than Mrs., Honey, Hey you, or Mommy. The class is invited to ask the teacher any goofy question they wish.

Students have fun with this exercise. As noted in Chapters 11 and 12, the way students feel about their teachers can make a big difference in their learning process.

From the very start of this exercise the class relaxes and starts to laugh. Students talk with each other and feel better. The atmosphere in the room changes drastically . Wander around the room getting interesting tidbits here, adding two bits' worth there; help students to know each other and to know you. Students remember much more about general course guidelines and other relevant information if they relax first and get the facts later. Help your students select study buddies and success groups. The usual study hall, fraternity/sorority fraternization that serves to assist the young university student is not available to the OTA student. The many demands of work, family and other obligations make time limited and precious. Showing them essential shortcuts of student success like telephone contacts with study buddy and success group members is essential.

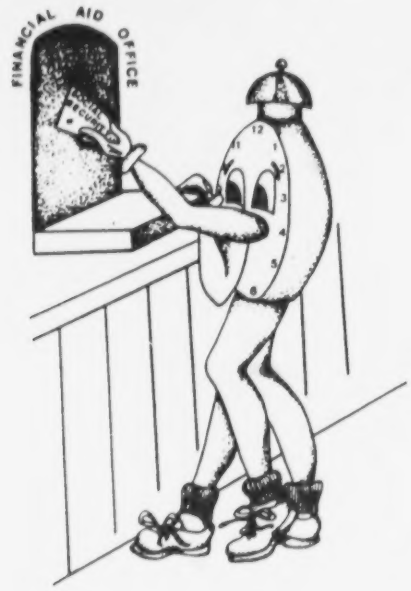
Since showing up for class is an important success habit, class attendance is always taken and is figured into their final grade. Students sign a class roster sheet which includes varying instructions. For instance, they may be asked, "Print; do not write your name"—"In One Word, Describe How You Are Feeling Today"—"Give the Teacher a Grade for How the Class Is Doing So Far." The students enjoy the roster sheet with its opportunity for input and following instructions is a critical factor for student success. This exercise also allows the teacher to take the "temperature" of the class as various issues. are addressed

Social security and phone numbers are requested on the roll sheet for special reasons. Using a social security number, a complete school record (including current schedule) can be pulled from the computer. This record can reveal a great deal of information about a student, particularly if they have been enrolled other terms or semesters. The phone number gives you a quick contact if grades or attendance begin to slip. The personalized show of "caring" plays a big part in student retention. By mid-term, students with less than satisfactory progress will be sent a personal note requesting a conference. Having the schedule of each student makes it easier to match compatible time for conferences. Some colleges have a system in place that automatically sends notes to students whom teachers identify as being at high risk. If a student's attendance is spotty and participation is nil, you have a high risk student.

Studies of older students show that an expanded syllabus with specific goals and finely detailed expectations are needed at the start of this course. Later, as their confidence builds, they thrive on more flexibility and freedom to pursue their preferred learning style. In the beginning, however carefully explained, highly structured requirements make students feel most comfortable.

Student grades in my course are based on:

Attendance	20%
Tests	20%
Class Participation	20%
Written Papers	20%
Personal Preference Projects	20%



Chapter 3

Enrolling and Financing Made Easier

To start the class period off on a positive note, set aside five minutes as a time for sharing of successes. Another tool used to get to know students is a "Personal Concerns" checklist (Attachment #2). This exercise may be conducted anonymously by using a social security number instead of a name, but it is a requirement at one of the first class meetings. The list shows how many are frightened of their professors, have personal problems, are recovering from drug/alcohol use, have dependent children at home, difficulty with time management, finances, stress management, etc. Just as every student is unique, every class is different from another. A tally of the concerns list identifies what kinds of problem solving should be emphasized in each class. Letting the class know the following week what kinds of problems were mentioned frequently, helps them know they are not the only ones concerned with shyness,, money, fear of tests, or many other items on the checklist.

Often students do not know their instructors' names, correct class titles, meeting times, room numbers, or instructors' office hours and location. Gathering this information, along with a fellow student's name and phone number for each class so that a "study buddy" is identified, is one of their first assignments. At the end of the term, students often ask for an extra sheet with this assignment layout so they can have it for the next term (Attachment #3).

Students in a college orientation class will become acquainted with the people, places, and procedures that help them succeed in college. The most important people for a new student to know are their classmates and their instructors. Throughout this course, exercises are designed to promote these relationships in the Personal Preference Project List (Attachment #4). Students are encouraged to study together using "study buddy" and success group suggestions listed at the end of each chapter. Duo-assignments are given and extra credit is awarded if they do personal interviews with their

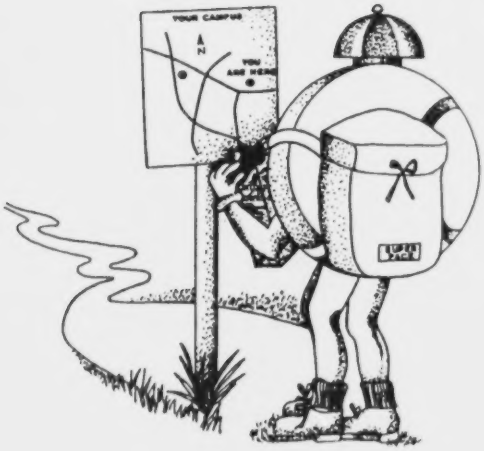
instructors or share lunch with another class member. Campus tours are given along with hands-on demonstration in the library/media center. One student, who somehow got in my class after six terms in college, stated it was the first time he'd been in the library. Do I need to tell you his GPA did not act as a guiding light to other students?

In Chapters 1 and 2 of *Time for College*, the joys, fears, and opportunities of going back to school are addressed. The hopes and dreams for the future are in the hearts of the people as they pour onto the campus. It is the students' fears that are quite obvious and just telling them to relax and not to worry doesn't do the trick. On the other hand, sharing some of their concerns and realizing that other students have the same fears and similar hopes does help..

> After the students have read Chapters 1 and 2, separate them into groups of three or four and have each share personal fears or myths. Ask each group to suggest ways to handle these concerns. After ten minutes, a spokesperson is selected and reports to the class the best solution for overcoming a fear that their group has identified. This activity helps reduce anxieties.

Since financial pressures fuel the fires for many a fear, my guest speaker list includes someone skilled in identifying resources for meeting school costs and in preparing a "bare bones" budget. Discussion topics included ways to trade services, how to get necessities for less, how to stretch a dollar and information about grants, scholarships and loans. is shared

There are many frustrations built into getting started in school. To allow students to share a little, I assign a paper, "The Best and Worst of the First Week of School." This paper also allows me to see whose writing skills need improvement. I can then make appropriate referrals to classes or the Alternative Learning Center.



Chapter 4

Orientation: Getting Acquainted with Campus

Arrange for someone else to lead the group during campus and facility tours so that you are free to interact with the students and to listen to their questions and comments. When students share a pleasant activity outside the classroom with their teacher, the feeling of the distance in the professor-student relationship is decreased.

Students are inclined to go in programmed tracks to their classes. This is known as the P.C.P. syndrome (Parking Lot-Class-Parking Lot). They can miss out on the many opportunities for assistance and for enrichment the campus affords. Take a campus tour, noting certain vocational careers like graphic reproduction, dental hygienist, and computer service technician. The P.E. facility, featuring swimming pool and work-out rooms, are introduced as the "cheapest health spa" in town. The Alternative Learning Center and tutor areas are pointed out as sources for academic help. The nurse's room and the counseling department are identified fas centers for those seeking assistance with medical and mental health concerns. (The OTA student may appreciate a free blood pressure check!) The school newspaper, student government, and art galleries provide avenues for students to become involved in college, thereby increasing their chances for success.

The more aware and involved OTA students become in opportunities for personal growth and assistance, the more likely they are to stay, succeed, and make significant contributions to college life. Encourage them to lead a campus tour for a friend or family member. (See Personal Preference Project List.) The OTA student needs to build a support group of partners, friends, and family. (See Chapter 5.)

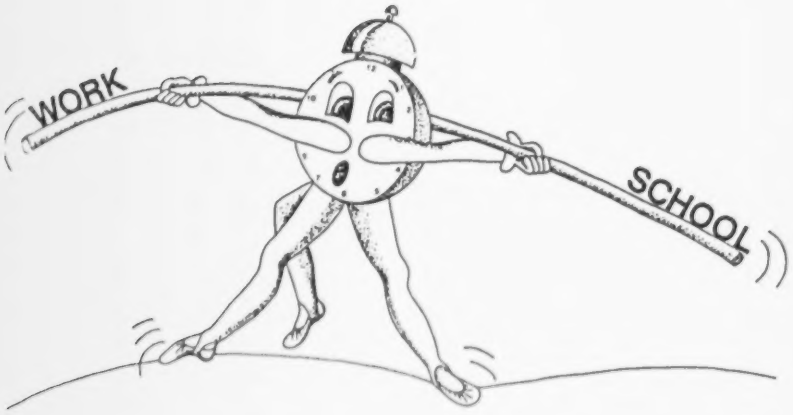
Chapter 5

How to Gain Family Support and Encouragement

Students are not the only ones who undergo culture shock when the OTA person decides to return to school. There may be rumblings on the home front when McDonald's is used as a family chef once too often, the floor has an extra layer of carpeting made up of dirty clothes or when no steady paycheck comes in, Give students an opportunity to "vent" their frustrations about some of the problems that have arisen and then concentrate on solutions by showing them how to build a positive support system.

Acquaint students with any support groups on campus: Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Narcotics Anonymous, Displaced Homemakers, Handicapped Services, or Dislocated Workers. There will be many people in your class who will need this kind of support in addition to reinforcement from family and friends. Some older students could use some anti-guilt pills as they go about changing roles and taking time for school, particularly if they have children at home. For those individuals, a discussion of the positive side effects of their getting an education is in order.

OTA often bring a physical, academic, or emotional problem with them when they begin school. Individual counseling sessions are part of the curriculum in the first three weeks of class work. No matter how much interaction is going on in the classroom, one-to-one sessions show how little is really known about each student. Allowing them to see us in our office settings helps take us off the "classroom pedestal" and to be seen as more approachable. Once special needs of individual students are known, appropriate referrals and recommendations can be made to Handicapped Services, the learning disability specialist, or a counselor.



Chapter 6

How to Balance Going to College with Working

Chapter 6 addresses the different options in combining school and work. Most students at two-year colleges and an increasing number of university students work while attending school. Frequently full-time workers dominate the night and weekend classes.

The desire to enhance or change careers is the driving force behind most older students' return to school. The students need to share the particular experiences which prompted their decision to continue their education.

These learners are often unaware of financial help available to them through their companies or other resources. Ways of combining work and college credit are unfamiliar. Acquiring techniques to combine the many demands on their time is essential.

Resources:

Speakers from co-op work or prior life experience are welcomed by students because they readily see the practicality of such programs.

A panel of students who have successfully combined work and school demands is appreciated. New students welcome "how-to" tips.

People from business and industry who speak to the future needs of the work world will help tie in the work/school component for your students.

Chapter 7

Why Some Students Are More Successful than Others

This chapter discusses the habits and attitudes that lead to success. Our older students have already had some successes, but like most of us, the students' failures are more memorable. Sharing some of our own failures continues the humanizing-of-the-teacher process and helps students recognize their skills and strengths:

> Have students rewrite the script for a past failure, using the premise, "If I knew then what I know now."
>
> Get suggestions from students about what habits might lead them to success in this class.
>
> Have students "build bridges" by contrasting and comparing successes in their lives prior to the college experience with their successes in school.
>
> Ask students to set a realistic success goal for next week and to list the small steps that will help them reach their goal.

On one of the first days in College Survival and Success class (you may call it Freshman Orientation), after students have had an opportunity to know each other, discuss the "alphabet soup" of academia. Start with, "How many credits are you taking?" "What's a credit?" Define the terms GED, ABE, GPA, ESL, etc. Students are encouraged to stop me any time I accidentally slip into college terminology they don't understand.

It is easy to assume students know how many weeks in a term or semester, what meant by the term "major," the difference between a schedule and a catalog and how to interpret the schedule or how to register for their next

term's classes They've bumbled their way about and managed somehow to get into your class. It cannot be assumed they know the process and could repeat it if asked; this is a foreign land with a foreign language and they don't know yet if the natives are friendly.

Have students develop a list of terms from the schedules or catalogues that they wish to have explained. This exercise works best in groups of three or four. This activity also encourages use of the "study buddy" tool.

Let students use this chapter as a way of reviewing their understanding of the course syllabus. See how many have this readily available and if they have taken notes regarding tests, papers, and individual conferences. Does every student have a separate notebook for this course? Have they saved past assignments and tests? Share an example of a well kept notebook with good lecture notes.

One resource person the students find particularly helpful is the supply buyer from the bookstore, who shows the students different ways to organize their material. You have probably noticed that the new student can have material management problems. More than once students have carpeted my office with papers as they dug for the notes they wanted to discuss. To alleviate this problem, a student told me it would be helpful to hole-punch all my handouts. It's not only students who have to learn!

Chapter 8

How to Manage Time and Study Efficiently

Time management can often be a problem for older students because they are already playing so many different roles. They are part- or full-time workers, parents, partners, and/or caretakers of elderly parents. School is not the only important thing in their lives. Frequently, they try to take care of everything except themselves. Before students set up a study schedule, it is useful to help them recognize how they are presently spending their time. This is a tremendous adjustment period as they combine home, work and personal demands.

A good exercise to use when discussing personal and school obligations is "What am I doing this week?"

> Using a time chart is a good "starter." Have the students use a different colored pencil to represent a specific activity (school, work, sleep, social, TV, etc.). This technique makes it easier for them to see how they spend their time. (See Time Chart at end of text.)

> This activity helps people to evaluate and prioritize their time-consuming tasks and to re-evaluate these tasks. "I didn't know I studied so much...or so little!" "I thought I had more time for myself. No wonder I'm tired!" "Do I really spend that much time watching TV?" Once participants know how they're spending their time, ask them to dream a little. What are the things for which they wish they had time? If they could make their lives be any way they wanted—what would it be like? Fantasize the future! Ask them to consider what their ideal life would be like five years from now. Help them develop a new time schedule and see how more joy can be built into the here-and-now. The compulsive student can be hard to convince it's o.k. to have fun and dream a little.

My first class in college was from a history professor who provided a list of study questions a week before mid-terms and finals. This introduced me to the technique of trading questions and answers with "study buddies." Encourage students to try this method to facilitate the active learning process.

Sometimes bright students and slow students tend to isolate themselves from others—one thinks, "I know more than the other students;" the other thinks, "This is too dumb a question to ask."

> Since questioning and reciting are essential parts of active learning, have a group of students role model a "Success Group" session in front of the class to illustrate the process and productivity of such a session.

Participation is 20% of the class grade. Praise students for good questions asked. Consider giving "Participator of the Week" awards as a means of encouraging interchange.

Chapter 9

The Best Way to Study

A useful film for viewing at this time is "The Time of Your Life" (based on Alan Lakein's book *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*). It will help inspire students to make adjustments to better manage their lives.

Since the film is extremely well-organized, it is also used as an exercise in note taking. The notes are then developed into a major paper entitled "How I've Learned to Manage My Time As a Student." Everyone is required to hand in notes, a rough draft and the finished copy. This reinforces suggestions in Chapter 7 on note taking.

Students are encouraged to use the research librarian for help in finding quotes from famous people on the subject of time. Information in Chapters 7 and 9 on note taking, and Chapter 11 on writing papers and using the library are very helpful for this exercise. Once again, encourage students to use the library with a study buddy.

By now the students should have some experience trying to study in different places and at different times. Break students into groups of three or four and have them identify barriers to an effective study session and the four best traits of a good study session. Choose a group reporter to write these factors on the board so the class can see similarities and differences in the lists.

The OTA student can have difficulty in setting aside a quiet study area at home. For this reason studying with other students in a study hall, media center, or a cafeteria in off-hours is suggested. Their neighborhood library can be a good choice if the college library is too crowded.

A representative from our Alternative Learning Center talks to the class about learning tapes and tutors who help in math, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Older students frequently need review in one or more of these areas. Once they get used to the computer, the individualized learning it allows is particularly valued by the OTA student.

Physical exercise is encouraged because it builds fitness and is a terrific stress reducer. It can be very difficult convincing the older student that regular physical exercise is a college survival tool. After they are feeling "dead at both ends" from several weeks sitting in standard lecture classes, students are a little easier to convince. Promote their well-being by taking them for a brisk, short walk and have them monitor how they feel before and after the walk. The results can be an eye-opener. There will be days when the best-laid plans just aren't working. Take a walk—with the class—you'll all feel better!

The older student may have a physical disability which requires a referral to the physical therapist (on the P.E. staff). Those who suffer from arthritis or bad backs may find the handicapped swim class helpful. Special exercise equipment helps in conditioning. The Beginning Walking and Fitness class is popular for the just-plain-under-exercised students. Regular use of the physical fitness facilities can be one of the best "boosters" for getting the mind in good working order and refreshing the spirit.

Even when the older student is in good physical condition, sitting on small, hard little chairs for a few extra hours or all day is hard on the body. Regularly scheduled breaks and frequent stretch breaks should be part of the class routine. Let them know physical activity should be a regular item on their "To Do" list.

Chapter 10

How to Get High Grades on Tests

Giving the students an opportunity to develop their own mid-term and final exams for extra credit based on the book's content is a good learning tool. This activity reinforces the SQ4R Method covered in Chapter 9. It significantly reduces student complaints about tests. Students find that making up a good test isn't as easy as it looks, especially when their classmates give them feedback on their test questions they developed. This experience also reinforces the value of group study by showing different viewpoints on essential material.

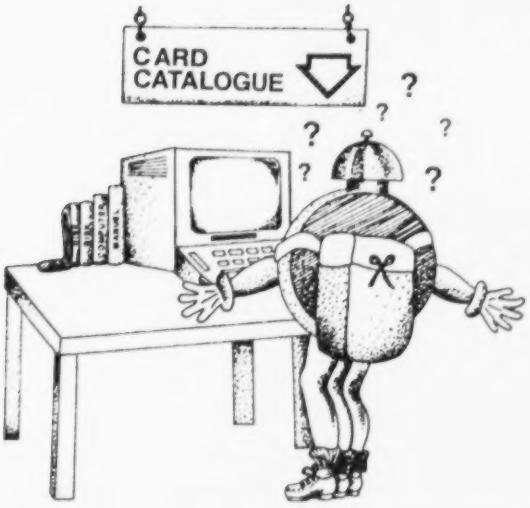
On a daily basis, to decrease test anxiety, have students hand in four questions with answers from their reading or lecture notes. These questions are used for frequent practice tests that have no impact on their grades. The students get used to "Oh this is just another practice test," relax, and do much better work. This activity also allows students to feel more a part of the class. If a question is frequently missed, the author of the question may be called on to expand or defend the answer. This encourages class participation and involvement.

Since fear of tests is among the top five on the personal concerns list, Chapter 11 offers comments on test-taking. In my course, I give a simple take-home true/false test is given within the first few weeks of the term and I encourage students to work together. Extra points are given if the students work with each other taking the test. The next test given to students covers general information from readings, the textbook and data gleaned in the tours of facilities.

Again, extra points are given for completing the test with another student. This reinforces the study buddy method as well as helping them to do better on tests. These techniques help lower test anxiety. True/false, multiple choice, open book, essay, timed, and "take home" tests are given to help the student get accustomed to taking tests, identifying which test is the least threatening for them, and getting hints from other students on how to prepare for their least favorite type of tests. to lower anxiety. All tests make up only 20% of their grade, anxiety is lowered.

Chapter 10 concludes with a note encouraging a good night's sleep. Students cutting sleep too short consume caffeine (via coffee or pop) and then wonder why they can't think straight during a test. Swilling caffeine before exam time is not a good idea, either. To get the blood flowing, the breath blowing, and excess anxiety flying, suggest they "take a hike" instead—not too far off campus you understand.

Unidentified learning disabilities often give test takers trouble. Dyslexia can cause misreading of statements or figures. High blood pressure medication can cause loss of comprehension in timed tests. Hearing loss can prevent understanding oral instructions. If test results are not in keeping with student's other performance, consider that physical problems or the anxiety level may be factors. For students who have "never done well on tests" further investigation is in order.



Chapter 11

How to Write Excellent Papers

Probably nowhere on campus is the advance of the information age more in evident than in your library—even the name may be changed to Media Center or Learning Resources Center. No longer are books the mainstay of the collection. Video and audio tapes are a major part of the learning materials, along with computers, tape recorders and VCRs. Touring of this center is not enough. The old card catalogs are no longer the information retrieval systems; some hands-on computer experience will be necessary for the successful student.

To go along with their "How I Manage My Time as a Student" paper, request the librarian's assistance in setting up a learning packet for this topic so that students will have some practical experience in utilizing the library. Students should be encouraged to work independently or with a fellow student.

It may have been a long time since OTA learners have written papers and they can be paralyzed at the thought of a written assignment. A method that helps to limber up literary talents is what I call "The Spatter Pattern." A topic is written in the middle of the board and students suggest words or phrases that are "triggered" by the term. All these are listed in a spatter pattern around the central topic. When at least 25 suggestions are noted, students are asked to connect as many as they can into three related subtopics. After connections are made, the words or phrases that do not fit well are discarded. The class then divides into six groups, each with a different topic to expand into the spatter pattern. If a group is in difficulty after five minutes, they may ask help from another group. Connections are made under three main subtopics and group results are shared. The class is then asked to suggest resources for finding information on their topics of interest. This exercise has proven useful as a "writers' block-buster"; it reinforces their thinking about people as resources and utilizes their success group or study buddy network.

The resource people most listened to by students are other students. Have a panel of second-term or second-year students share their successes and answer questions from the class. If no one has selected this group activity from the Personal Preference

Project List, the instructor should schedule the presentation. "Old-timers" who were once scared newcomers just a short time ago enjoy discussing their successes. At the end of the term your current class might enjoy presenting a panel on "The Adjustments I've Made to Become A Successful Student." Another good exercise is to have a student assume the role of peer advisor to a potential student.

Students are encouraged to use their study buddies or success groups to proofread or listen to the rough drafts of papers. The audio learner frequently finds it easier to identify awkward sentence structure or lack of transitions in this way. Exceptional papers are shared with the class with the students' permission. Encourage students to read their own work. Sharing helps other students know what the teacher expects in an outstanding paper. It also squelches effectively complaints of "How come I didn't get an *'A'*!?" Students sharing with other students can be more effective than your most dynamic lecture on "How to Write Excellent Papers." It also reinforces the need to be an active participant in class. I often ask students to read their papers on the spur of the moment so that shy students will not have time to develop extreme anxieties. Class sharing can be a confidence-booster for those who dread speaking before groups.

Chapter 12

Resolving Predictable Conflicts Between Instructors and Students

Let students know all important lessons are not learned in a classroom. Share with them examples that provided you insight: i.e., from speech classes; observing poor teaching models; leading youth groups; values you learned from a parent; other work situations. Identify some of your most dynamic learning situations and how they have helped you in the classroom. Encourage students to volunteer their particular experiences.

> Now that the students are well into their term's work, break them into small groups, making sure you mix up study buddies and success groups so that everyone has the opportunity to share a work situation with another person. Ask them to a list qualities that characterize a great teacher, whether that teacher was in a formal classroom or not. From that list they will choose three qualities and list these on the board. A general discussion on how these qualities can be reinforced by the learner in the classroom follows.

There are many formal evaluations of a good teacher. You may wish to hand out one and let the class compare their list to a more formal one.

Conflict in learning/teaching styles can arise because student and teacher have different styles of communication. If the student can be helped to understand that their way of communicating and learning can be very different from another style, frustration, anger, and blaming can be decreased.

Apple Computer's personality test "Please Understand Me" will, in 20 minutes, give the student a printout of personality type, career options and mate preference. Students are encouraged to use this assessment tool or the Myers-Briggs Personality Test. They not only get a better picture of themselves, but they begin to realize that teachers, fellow students and friends

are not intentionally trying to irritate them, but are simply different personality types. The printout may be used as a discussion tool with their advisor or counselor in further academic planning.

The film "Grab Hold of Today," by Eden Ryl (28 minutes—Ramic Productions, 1977) explores false assumptions that people make about others' behavior. The film is a nice tie-in to the discussion of learning/teaching styles.

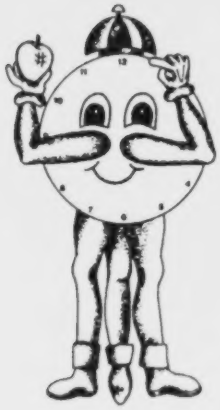
The book *In Search of Excellence* recommends the "walking around" method of management. This can also be implemented in the classroom. The shy student, who may well be one of the "distant learners" referred to in Chapter 11, can be encouraged by a hand on the shoulder as you pass by. The left-brain person can be allowed to make an oral report. If the group discovers a creative solution, it reinforces the fact that the teacher is not the only instructor in the room. It's a great confidence booster.

There is value in reviewing factors which lead to effective instruction. *Innovation Abstracts*, published by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, reviews findings from learning and memory retention studies. Research indicates that persons retain:

10%	of what they read
20%	of what they hear
30%	of what they see
50%	of what they see and hear
70%	of what they say
90%	of what they do and say

Methods which stimulate the widest variety of senses will generally be most effective. 1) Generally, the more a person participates orally, the greater the amount of retention; 2) students who do not participate during the first two weeks of the semester, will usually remain silent for the entire semester. This is a good time to evaluate how much of the learning from this class is based on the students doing and saying something.

There is a Study Skills software program designed for use on the Apple computer (Study Skills: Self-exploration in Series 3) that can assist students in identifying the way they learn best. It takes about 30 minutes to complete the exercise. Encourage students to use their preferred learning style in developing their individual projects chosen from the Personal Preference Project List.



Chapter 13

How to Be Positive with Instructors and Salvage Poor Grades

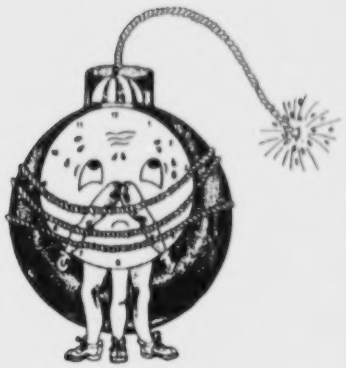
The Personal Preference Project List is a major tool in determining different learning/teaching styles. Social, visual, hands-on, artistic, audio, and writing exercises are included with the option for students to create their own project geared to their success/survival as a student. The items where they can interview or dutch-treat one of their professors is highlighted. The format suggested for an information interview (Appendix A) may also be used at lunch and is referred to here.

The lecture format, while not the most effective teaching method, is still popular. It's easy to fall into old role models and habits. A captive audience is a powerful lure! If heads start to nod or eyes glaze over, I know I've "blathered" on too long. It's time for a group activity. I was highly complimented when one student told me, "You don't really lecture much."

One of my classes decided to test the hypothesis that they could influence their teacher's behavior with negative reinforcers. They developed an action plan at break time and when I came back in the room, they started with a barrage of complaints. "I don't like the way you.... It wasn't fair when you.... It doesn't look to me like you know what you are doing when...." they complained for about five or ten minutes. Their behavior threw me right back into feeling like I did in my teacher training days. "I'm not sure what I'm doing here or even if I want to be here." When the class, convulsed with laughter, abandoned its behavior modification experiment, I was able to express my feelings to the group. At the close of the period the consensus was that positive reinforcement worked best for both teachers and students.

By this time some of the students should have participated in an information interview with one or more of their instructors. This is a good opportunity to discuss beliefs about teachers and the value of getting to know instructors.

Since the Personal Preference Projects are an important assignment in this class, have the students list what they have to this point and ask what they are currently working on. This is a good self-evaluation tool, and it also acts as a nudge to others to get busy.



Chapter 14

How to Maintain a Positive Attitude in Stressful Situations

As students become more confident with their new identity, introduce them to a Career Resource Center representative who can show them steps they can take to "unfuzzy" their career aspirations. Students need reassurance that career decisions seldom come overnight—like a revelation. Often desperate for change in their lives, these students can be hard to convince that it's not only o.k. but necessary to relax and allow themselves time to set goals and focus on a career.

Most students enjoy an exercise involving a fantasy trip into the future. Often the "everydayness" of school/life demands prevent their being clear about their objectives, hopes and dreams. In the fantasy trip exercise, students are told first to relax and then help dream up their future. They envision their lifestyle, their way of dressing for work and leisure, the type of home where they live, the car that's being driven, how they earn their living, what they do for vacations. When the exercise is completed, have the class share their fantasy trip. It is important for students to see the connection between tomorrow's dreams and today's goals.

To assist students in relaxing and visualizing their goals, I use Jacobson's *Relaxation Techniques* (which emphasizes deep breathing and sequential relaxation). There are tapes that may be used with this exercise. If they can see that this opportunity in school is calling on their ability as a survivor (See Chapter 15) anxiety is reduced and expectations raised. Students particularly appreciate this activity one or two weeks before examination time.

Encourage your students to take time out for good behavior by listening to a relaxation tape daily. OTA students often schedule time for everyone and everything, except themselves. A relaxation exercise narrated by the student produces the most effective results. Provide a demonstration model and encourage students to duplicate the content.

After students have identified long-term goals, discuss with them the concrete and practical "small steps" they must take in the next 3 or 4 months to achieve those goals.

Students may require help in scheduling classes for the following term. If they are still unclear about career goals, recommend a career class. If some have underdeveloped reading, writing, speaking, or math skills, suggest specific developmental courses. Review the process of scheduling and registration. Schedules are discussed in the class so students can exchange information about classes and instructors. Verify that each student has an advisor.

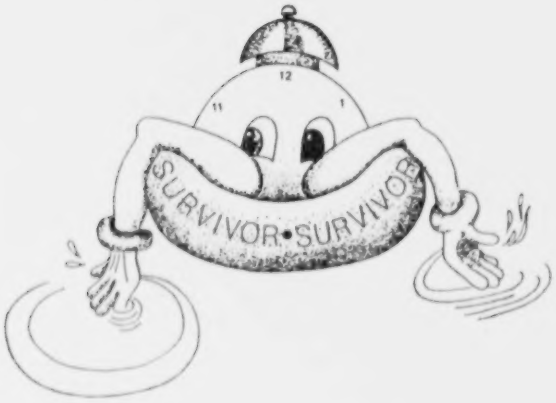
A take-home, open book, comprehensive examination is available for those students who desire a written review. Many students choose to do this, proving that they understand that better-than-average work is expected for better-than-average grades.

Some students choose to develop their own final exam from reading assignments and lecture notes. They are usually my top students—ones who have formed successful study habits.

As the term draws to a close, students are busy sharing individual projects. Oral reports such "How I Overcame Math Anxiety" or "How I Made A Friend This Term" receive close attention from fellow classmates. Poems dealing with stress management and posters on time management themes are shared. Tips on balancing work and school are exchanged. Family members are brought to class. One young man introduced his six-month-old son as the prime motivator of his success in school. Remember that the more a student is encouraged to share, the more that student will care about college success.

Positively reinforce students' efforts. Share examples: research projects, poems, paintings, collages, and photographs from previous classes. Giving praise and encouraging class members to support each other adds to their feelings of success.

At this point, it could be useful to re-administer the Personal Concerns List. Students usually are very pleased with the results when they compare their first-of-the-term responses. If some areas still need attention, share suggestions from others who have successfully resolved their issues.



Chapter 15

The School of Life: How to Develop a Survivor Personality

By the end of this course, the OTA students should realize, as stated in Chapter 14, that this is only the beginning. Learning is a lifelong process and they are smarter than they thought they were. Life experience is beginning to blend with school demands and college success is now seeming possible.

Al Siebert's research findings about the personalities of life's best survivors has a very positive, affirming effect on older students. After reading this chapter many of them state "I'm a survivor!"

People with survivor personalities gain strength from adversity. A useful classroom activity is to have them talk with each other in small groups about how one of the worst things they ever went through was one of the best things that ever happened to them.

The film "The Habit of Winning" is about professional football players who have become successful in other careers. It is an upbeat film that may have more appeal to men than women. Eden Ryl's film "You Pack Your Own Chute" emphasizes that the individuals have choices and that each is responsible for their success. Both are good "survivor" films.

It can be useful to take the very qualities of the survivor personality in this last chapter and use them to evaluate the teaching and content of this course. Evaluating criteria also listed in the American Association for Higher Education Bulletin (March 1987), which identifies seven characteristics of good practice in higher education:

1. Encourage student/faculty contact
2. Encourage cooperation among students
3. Encourage active learning
4. Give prompt feedback
5. Emphasize time on task
6. Communicate high expectations
7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning

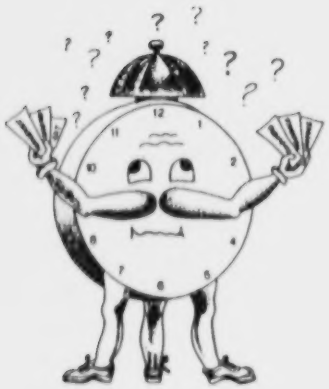
Somehow, at the end of the term, there have always been students who use their Personal Preference Project List to insure that a party is substituted for the standard written exam Our parties have included international themes, sing-alongs, face-paintings, Pictionary games, and of course, great food! By this time, students should have learned that their instructor is approachable, fellow students are friends, and school can be an exciting, positive experience that is fun. This knowledge serves as a great stress reducer.

If a student doesn't "see that learning can be fun," I feel I have not done my job. The party has always served to reinforce the concept of the teacher as a human being and also serves to strengthen bonds between students. It doesn't hurt that they are the envy of the students in other classes! An oral review of student success strategies is shared during the party and helps put the accent on a positive note.

We can do it ourselves—"with a little bit of help..." becomes the attitude of the practical OTA student. I hope this manual has been that "little bit of help" that provides useful ideas, information and activities to make the text a valuable resource.

When students can say at the end of this course, "I feel so much better and it's going to be a wonderful experience," you know you've helped them develop an attitude that will help them go the distance. When you, as their teacher/facilitator/director, have helped them perform successfully, it can result in a *long run*. Curtain going up! Enjoy the show!

FINAL — PARTY!



Appendix A

Career Choice, Career Change

The OTA students are often anxious to choose a new career in a hurry. When many years have passed since their last formal education, they have little faith in their academic abilities. Other life crises are frequently weighting their decision with strong emotions.

These students can most often be helped by a career class where they not only have the opportunity to use various assessment instruments but where there is also a built-in sharing between OTA students of their struggles, fears, and uncertainties. This sharing allows relief from the feeling that "Here I am at my age, the only one that still doesn't know what I want to do when I grow up." Sharing experiences and decision-making are among the most valued tools for choosing a new career.

Let them know that brushing up on their basic skills and taking time for career decisions is the best way to come to a meaningful new career choice.

Afterword

Effective College Teaching

by Al Siebert

For you to be an effective college level instructor, you must consciously and purposefully work to acquire good teaching skills. You probably remember taking college courses from instructors deficient in teaching skills. Most of us have horror stories we can tell about incompetent, unfair, inconsistent, irresponsible instructors.

The problem for college students, and the reason why many of them drop out, is that a person can obtain a teaching position at a college without ever taking a class on how to teach.

Teaching is a skill that has to be learned just as you had to work at learning the subject you teach. If you've had no courses or instruction on how to teach college students, specifically, older students, I recommend the following:

1. Purchase a copy of *Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher* (8th edition) by Wilbert J. McKeachie, D.C. Heath and Company, 125 Spring Street, Lexington, MA 02173. *Teaching Tips* is full of practical, useful guidelines on how to become an effective instructor.

2. Arrange to meet regularly with other instructors to talk about ways to improve your teaching skills. When I was a teaching fellow in the psychology department at the University of Michigan, McKeachie held a noontime brown bag seminar that met once a week each semester. Anyone could come. We discussed whatever topics we wanted. It was immensely helpful.

3. Get feedback from students on how well you are doing. Listen to their suggestions on how you could improve. At the back of this book there is a simple but effective evaluation form that you can copy and use.

It takes years of self-motivated, self-managed learning to become an effective college instructor. One has to be a student, a student of teaching effectiveness. The effort is worth it. The satisfaction you derive from knowing you've taught well and the experience of making a difference in people's lives gives you an emotional reward far more valuable than any paycheck.

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Duo Interview: Questions I Thought You'd Never Ask!

Your first name is _____?

Name a famous person you would like to be.

What was the color of a favorite piece of clothing when you were a kid?

Name something you've kept for a long, long time.

What are you doing when you "lose" track of time?

Name three things you would put in a room if you had to stay one year.

A place you have always wanted to visit is?

Three qualities you look for in a friend are?

When you are blue, how do you pamper yourself?

A nickname you've been called is _____. Why?

Is there something you would you like to change about yourself?

What would you rather be doing than attending this class?

What bugs you about some people?

What is something no one would know about you, just by looking at you?

PERSONAL CONCERNS LIST

M F Age SS#

Rate each issue by circling the number which is of personal concern to you from 1, meaning small to 5, indicating big.

	Small				Big
1. Shyness.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Feeling overwhelmed by the school setting.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Stress.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Not knowing how to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Family pressure.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Depression.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Friend's/partner's reaction to my attending school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Feeling overwhelmed by school work.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Pressure of job and school.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Having enough money to live while in school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Child care.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Drugs/alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Apprehension regarding college professors.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Fitting in socially at school.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Not knowing my way around campus.	1	2	3	4	5

Other: _____

Rate each statement by circling the number you feel describes you:

	Small				Big
1. I'm not sure that I can do all the work required..	1	2	3	4	5
2. I'm not sure what classes I should take.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I don't know what career to prepare for.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have trouble making friends.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have trouble setting goals and sticking to them.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I'm not sure I'm ready for college.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I'm concerned because I've been out of school for a long time.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have trouble asking questions in class.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am having some family problems.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have a lot of responsibilities outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Most of my friends are not in school at this time.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I don't read well or I don't like to read.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I'm concerned about taking tests.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am having some personal problems at this time.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I've tried to go to college before, but I had to quit.	1	2	3	4	5

Other: _____

On the other side of the page list *three* things you are hoping to learn about or accomplish in this class:

Attachment #3

Name_____
Class_____
Instructor_____
Date_____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8 a.m.					
9 a.m					
10 a.m.					
11 a.m.					
Noon					
1 p.m.					
2 p.m.					
3 p.m.					

1st Hour Instructor _____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

2nd Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

3rd Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

4th Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

5th Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

Name_____
Class_____
Instructor_____
Date_____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 p.m.					
4 p.m					
5 p.m.					
6 p.m.					
7 p.m.					
8 p.m.					
9 p.m.					
10 p.m.					

1st Hour Instructor _____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

2nd Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

3rd Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

4th Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

5th Hour Instructor_____ Office Hrs./Location _____
Study Buddy in class _____ Phone _____

College Success/Survival - Personal Preferences Projects

1. Write a paper on topic "How College Success/Survival Class Has Helped and How It Could Be Improved."
2. Write a paper on subject from the text, including data from research.
3. Interview a potential advisor using a list of questions you've determined would be useful to you.
4. Invite someone from one of your classes to share lunch or coffee and get acquainted. Write a short paper describing the value of this experience.
5. Develop and take a survey of students identifying factors of student success.
6. Research "Success" and write a paper or give an oral report on the subject.
7. Give an oral presentation on "Time Management."
8. Use the computerized career assessment in Career Resource Center, examine the results; . pick an occupation and do an information interview.
9. Research and identify ways the college can help you set career goals—report orally or in writing.
10. Create a painting or poster depicting a major topic of this class; i.e. stress, time management, success, or survival.
11. Create a poem about student stress, success, or survival.
12. Develop a cartoon based on college success/survival.
13. Develop a mid-term or final exam (with an answer sheet) based on text and other course content.
14. Take pictures of class members and create a collage of the College Success/Survival class.
15. Organize a class potluck for an end-of-term get-together. The activity may be used as a substitute for a final exam.
16. Write a paper on how one can maintain a successful relationship (child, friend, partner) and still succeed in school.
17. Take "Please Understand Me" in the Career Resource Center and get "Mate" printout to help understand the way you handle relationships. Discuss this with a counselor.
18. Arrange for a resource person to make a class presentation.
19. Have a "study buddy" session at school for an hour; report about the session.
20. Bring a friend to school and tour the campus.
21. Take an instructor to lunch to learn more about her/him.
22. Create a scavenger hunt for student survival skills.
23. Develop a College Survival trivia game.
24. Interview a foreign student. Share your experiences.
25. Write a song about college success.
26. Join one of the clubs, sponsored by Student Government, and report the value of the experience to class members.
27. "Other" project, as discussed and approved by the instructor.

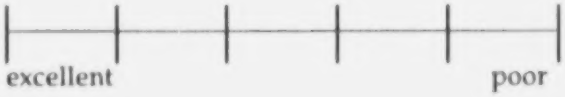
Attachment #5

Course Evaluation

Course Title _____ School Year _____
Instructor _____

Rating of the instructor:

Rating of the course:



In the space below please state...

1. What you liked best about the instructor and the course:

2. What you liked least about the instructor and the course:

3. Suggestions for improvement:

4. Other comments:

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